



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 5, 2019

Agenda Item: 2020-2021 Deer Hunting Seasons and Hunting District Boundaries

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 Minutes

Background: Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted for most game species every other year between December and final adoptions in February. In proposing regulations to the commission, FWP proposes adopting the existing 2019 structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

Among other proposed changes, there are several boundary changes combining hunting districts or portions of districts to simplify regulations and enhance management. Some of the more substantial changes are:

Region 1 - Hunting district boundary changes in the Flathead and Swan valleys (HDs 130, 132, 140 & 170) and Bob Marshall (combine HDs 150 & 151).

An OTC (limit 1/hunter) 199-00 either-sex whitetail B license for the Libby CWD Management Zone (portions of HDs 100, 103 & 104) to reduce deer densities.

Region 2 - Hunting district boundary changes in the Upper Clark Fork (HDs 212, 213 & 217) and Philipsburg valleys (HDs 211, 212 & 214).

Add a 3-point or less mule deer buck permit in HD 270 to lower buck numbers to improve herd health and manage for CWD while not compromising trophy potential.

A general reduction in antlerless white-tailed deer B license opportunity in many HDs.

Region 3 - Remove unlimited mule deer buck permits and allow either-sex hunting in HDs 390 and 391.

Region 4 - Hunting district boundary changes on the East Front (HDs 404, 421 & 444), Snowy (HDs 411 & 412) and Castle mountains (combine HDs 449 & 452).

Change the general season length from three weeks to five weeks in HDs 400, 401, 403 & 406.

Region 6 - Hunting district boundary changes: Combine HDs 611 and part of 670; combine HDs 640, 641 and parts of 651 & 670; combine HDs 650 & part of 651; combine HDs 680 & 690. These changes reduce nine HDs to five.

These and all proposed changes are on the commission master list and justifications are in the commission packet.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Deer season comments were received during the Aug. 15 – Sep. 16 scoping and included interest in antlerless opportunities, access, and special muzzleloader and senior citizen seasons. In addition to public comment on proposed deer season structure changes taken during the Dec. 5 commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 22, 2020. Any final adoptions will take place at the February 2020 commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis: Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions, or no change from 2019 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt for public comment the 2020 and 2021 deer hunting seasons and hunting districts as presented by FWP, and that all other aspects of the deer season remain unchanged unless addressed in other proposals.